

# **Descriptive Analysis of Sexual Assault Incidents Reported to Alaska State Troopers: 2003-2004**



UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA  
ANCHORAGE

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# Research Partners

**Justice Center, University of Alaska Anchorage**

**Department of Public Safety, Division of Alaska State Troopers**

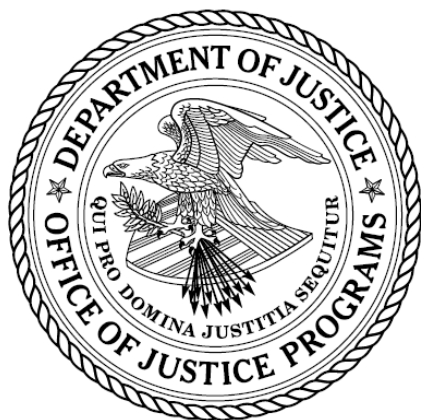
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# Financial Support



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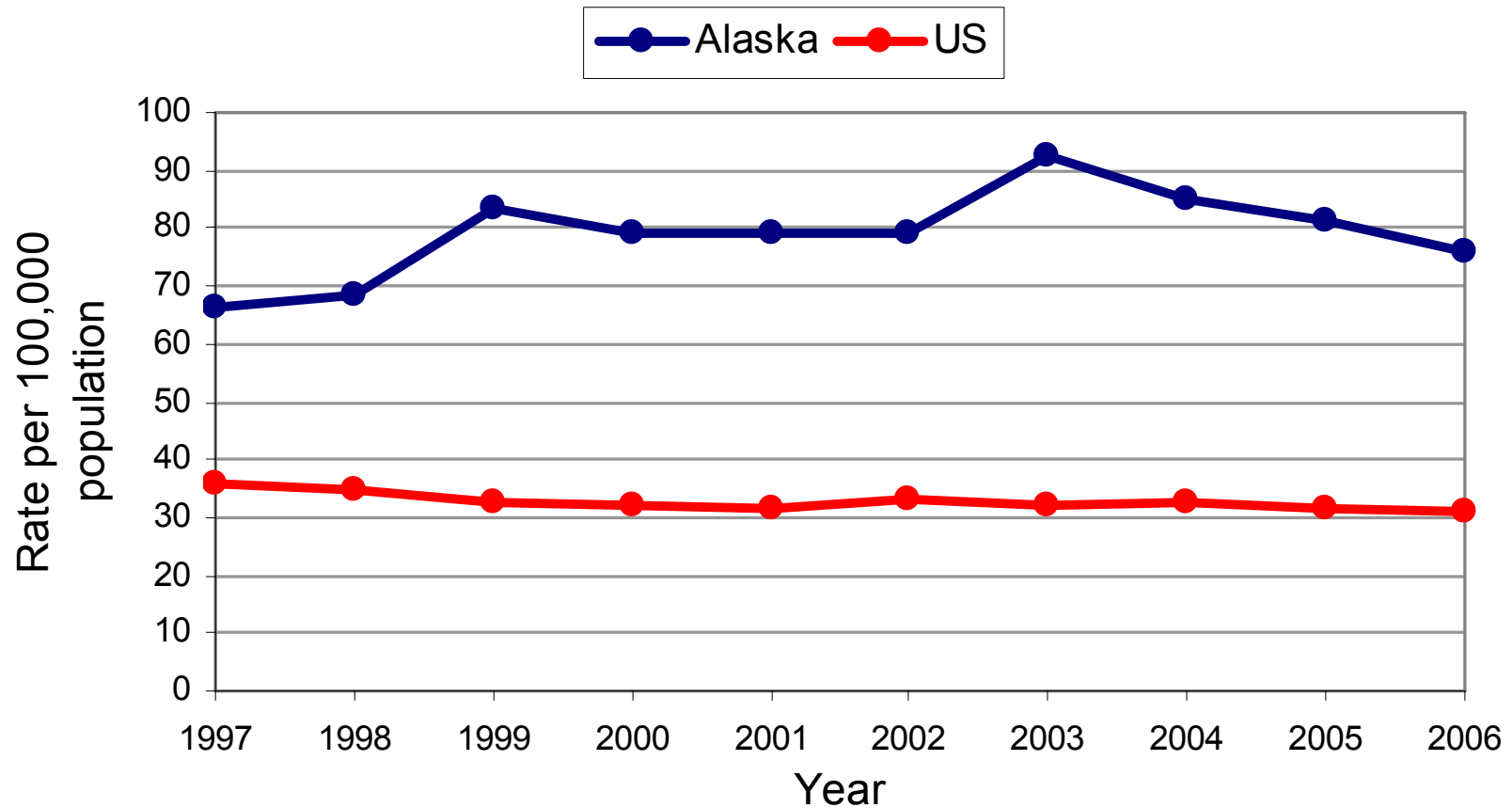


# Forcible Rape & Sexual Assault

- **Forcible Rape (FBI/UCR):**
  - carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Includes attempts, but excludes statutory rape (without force) and male victims.
- **Sexual Assault (AS 11.41.410-427, 11.41.434-438):**
  - Includes sexual penetration and sexual contact.
  - Includes statutory rapes.
  - Includes incapacitated rapes.
  - Includes male victims.



# Forcible Rape in Alaska



**Source:** Uniform Crime Reports, 1997-2006



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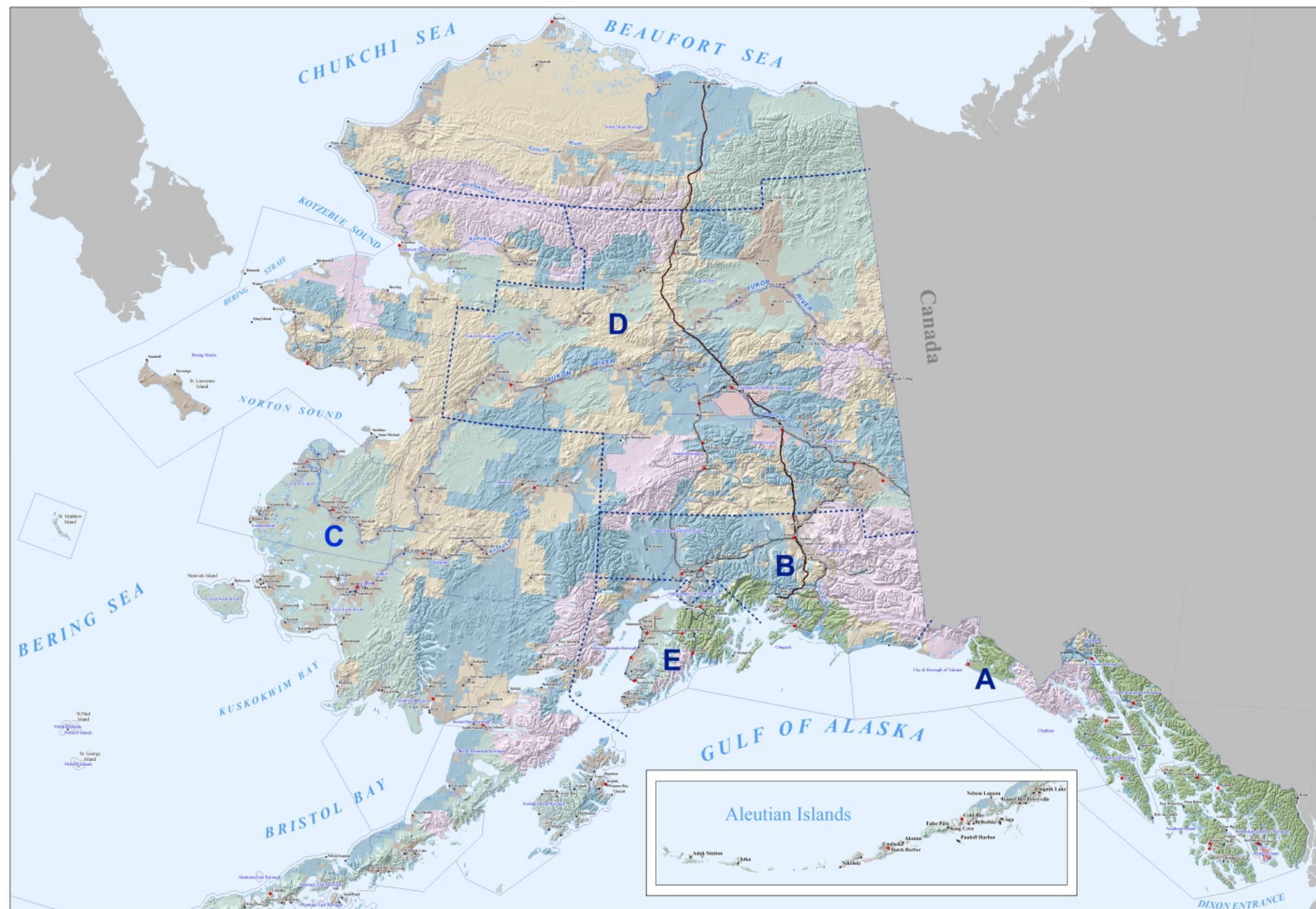


# Goals of UAA/AST/DOL Project

- **Describe Sexual Assaults Reported to Alaska State Troopers (AST):**
  - “Descriptive Analysis of Sexual Assault Incidents Reported to Alaska State Troopers: 2003-2004.”
  - <http://justice.uaa.alaska.edu>
- **Improve AST Response, to Enhance:**
  - Victim and community safety, and
  - Offender accountability, by increasing the number of cases referred, accepted, and convicted.







# Methodology

- **AST Case Reviews:**
  - Sexual assaults and sexual abuse of minor cases reported to AST in 2003 and 2004 (N=989).
  - Summarized charge, suspect, victim, and incident characteristics.
- **DOL Outcome Data:**
  - Examined whether cases were referred, accepted, and convicted.
  - Only examined referrals to DOL.





# Key Findings

- **Report Characteristics**
- **Evidence Collection**
- **Suspect Characteristics**
- **Victim Characteristics**
- **Incident Characteristics**
- **Legal Resolutions**



# Report Characteristics

- **Number of reports by Detachment and Unit:**
  - 48% to C Detachment (Western AK), 30% to Alaska Bureau of Investigation (ABI)
  - 17% to Bethel Enforcement, 8% to Palmer ABI
- **First responder:**
  - 86% to AST, 7% to VPSO, 7% to VPO
- **Investigation outcome:**
  - Average investigation was 18 weeks, with half of the cases closed within 8 weeks
  - 15% were unfounded (false or baseless)
    - 81% of unfounded cases were reported by someone other than the victim



# Evidence Collection

- Physical evidence from victim 22%
- Victim sexual assault evidence collection kit 20%
- Physical evidence from the scene 16%
- Physical evidence from the suspect 13%
- Photographs of the scene 13%
- Suspect sexual assault evidence collection kit 7%
  
- Search warrants 36%
- Forensic exams of evidence 16%



# Suspect Characteristics

- **Demographics:**
  - 97% male
  - 59% Native and 37% White
  - On average, 29 years old
- **Locating and interviewing the suspect:**
  - Identity known for 90% of suspects
  - 25% of suspects present upon Trooper arrival
  - 66% cooperated
  - 77% interviewed (57% within one week)



# Suspect Characteristics

- **Substance use (incident based):**
  - 43% used alcohol (57% did not)
  - 7% used drugs (93% did not)
- **Charges:**
  - 34% with multiple charges
  - 27% with multiple sexual assault charges
  - 6% with non-sexual assault charges



# Victim Characteristics

- **Demographics:**

- 89% female; 61% Native and 38% White
- On average, 16 years old (80% under 21 years of age; 65% under 16)
- Most assaults were intra-racial
- Most victims were younger than suspects

- **Substance use (incident based):**

- 27% used alcohol; 5% used drugs

- **Victim injuries:**

- 19% with physical pain, 10% with bruising and swelling





# Victim/Suspect Comparisons

- **Overall, 87% of Assaults were Intra-Racial:**
  - 91% of Native victims assaulted by Native suspects
  - 84% of White victims assaulted by White suspects
- **Five Most Common Age Combinations (48%):**
  - 13%: Victims 0-12 years old; Suspects 31+ years old
  - 11%: Victims 13-15 years old; Suspects 16-20 years old
  - 9%: Victims 13-15 years old; Suspects 21-30 years old
  - 7%: Victims 13-15 years old; Suspects 31+ years old
  - 7%: Victims 31+ years old; Suspects 31+ years old



# Victim Characteristics

- **Forensic / medical examinations:**
  - 26% received a SART exam (38% of victims who reported within 72 hours received a SART exam)
- **Victim interviews:**
  - 96% interviewed (91% in-person; 80% within one week)
- **Victim-suspect relationships:**
  - 46% were friends or acquaintances; 35% were family members; 12% were former or current partners. Only 2% were strangers
- **Required victim notifications rarely documented (OVR, DV and VCCB)**



# Incident Characteristics

- **Locations:**

- 84% initiated in a private residence, 86% occurred in a private residence

- **Victim condition at time of assault:**

- 60% were sober, 16% were intoxicated, 14% were sleeping, 10% were passed out (intoxicated)

- **Sexual acts:**

- 60% of incidents included sexual penetration
- 40% of incidents involved penile penetration of vagina
- 52% of incidents involved touching external genitalia



# Incident Characteristics

- **Weapons used during assault:**
  - 30% involved restraints/strikes by hands/feet; other weapons (knives, guns) used in less than 1% of incidents.
- **Ejaculation and condom use:**
  - Ejaculation occurred in 35% of incidents
  - Condoms used in 10% of incidents
- **Reporting incidents:**
  - 45% of incidents were reported within one day; 10% within 1-4 days; 5% within 5-7 days; 10% within 1-4 weeks; 30% more than 1 month after incident



# Legal Resolutions

- **Of the 989 Reports to AST:**
  - 46% (N=452) were referred to DOL (others may have been referred to other agencies),
  - 28% were accepted for prosecution, and
  - 22% resulted in a conviction (plea or jury/court trial).
- **Of the 452 Cases Referred to DOL:**
  - 60% (N=273) were accepted for prosecution, and
  - 49% resulted in a conviction (plea or jury/court trial).
- **Of the 273 Cases Accepted for Prosecution:**
  - 80% resulted in a conviction (plea or jury/court trial)



# Improving Legal Resolutions

- Most common reasons for not accepting charges as referred are evidentiary reasons
- Must improve capacity to collect evidence, when it is available
- Must now develop research-based responses to sexual assault
- Need systemic data-driven changes to prevention and intervention strategies
- Lowering the rate of sexual assault will require substantial investments and new initiatives





# Alaska State Troopers

## Comments and Questions



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